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TALES FROM THE SIKH HISTORY



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PATIALA.**

Published by :

**Director, Language Department, Punjab
Patiala.**

First Published : 1917

Reprint : 1971

PRICE : Re. 1-00

Printed by :

**Kishore & Kishore Printers,
Purani Kotwali,
Patiala.**

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Tales from the Sikh History by S. Harnam Singh was first published in 1917 by the Khalsa Historical and Literary Society, Rawalpindi under the Sikh folk-lore series.

It is said that these are not mere tales but accounts of actual happenings, occurred at different times. To inculcate the required qualities in their children, parents narrate their ancestors' stories. The present work also has the same purpose.

The Language Department has planned to bring out the reprints of most valuable works and this book is one of them. Most readers, scholars and research workers would benefit from this.

Patiala
June, 1971

RAJNISH KUMAR
Director,
Language Department,
Punjab.

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FOREWARD !

History is the record of a nation's character on the wide canvas of time. It is the compendium of experience for persons as well as peoples. It feels the pulse of society, fingers where it ails and proposes the cures, efficacious for age-long distempers. It beckons to the glories of the past and warns against the pitfalls of future. It presents in living array, men, women and children, who have enacted their parts "in this universal theatre", and proves with unerring instinct the words of the "Swan of Avon".

"Our actions follow us from afar,

And what we have been makes us what we are."

It is, in fact, impossible to read the future, without a glimpse of the past.

2. The Indians have, at all times, been conspicuous for their lack of the historical taste. This applies with still greater force to the Sikhs, who have until now, had rarely a breathing space from their battles on behalf of liberty and justice.

3. The phenomenal rise of the Khalsa Power and its meteoric downfall present a wonderful spectacle. "With nothing" in the words of Mr. Hunter, "but sword and their faith they stood up against an emperor who had the resources of the whole of India at his back." By the early Thirties of the Nineteenth Century, they had established an empire stretching from the banks of the Jumna to the mouth of the Khaibar. How many glorious sacrifices and marvellous exploits, implied in these thoughts ! The Khalsa brought within its fold, the sons and daughters of all castes and creeds, transmuted them into brothers and sisters—equal in the eyes of God and man—and sent them forth to fight and die in the

cause of truth and equity against prejudice and oppression. The vow of one *God*, one *Guru* and one *Creed* was taken and the *Theocracy* of Guru Gobind Singh became a centre of rally from oppression and bigotry. The spirit of Democracy went abroad and a single century saw twelve Sikh Confederacies established in the land of the Five rivers. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the "Lion of the Punjab" then appeared on the scene.

4. He did a singular service in consolidating the scattered forces of the Khalsa but alas the vital principle of the Sikh Democracy was forgotten ! The forces of despotism which permeated the air of the Orient, reasserted themselves and the Sikh nation fell a prey to them. Instead of becoming a *Jathadar* (President) of the Commonwealth he became an absolute monarch, mistook show of religion for religion itself, and admitting mercenaries to the highest places of trust, left the Khalsa spirit of Democracy to take refuge in the *Panchas* (Bodies of Five) of the Khalsa Army. The natural consequence of this incongruous disposition of things was that the devoted Sikhs turned to the army while the politics and state-craft were made over to the foreign temporizing element, preparing the way for the shock of arms on the banks of the Sutlej.

5. The History of the Khalsa has, at the best, been often slightly understood, based on doubtful materials, biassed by political and religious differences and subjected to shallow research. The portrait of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, for example, as presented by Sir Lepel Griffin, is calculated only to injure the susceptibilities of the Sikhs and is evidently delineated by the pen of passion rather than developed under the touches of a *historian*, and is therefore exactly one of the books which the Government may

do well to taboo. The only Sikh sources of information are the religiopoetic effusions, which are discarded by the western scholars as being the outcome of the fervid brain of 'Seers'. This is, of course, unjust, but altogether natural. The streaks of historical facts are embedded in these works, under so many layers of the imaginative products, archaic idioms and convolutions of thoughts and dialect as to repel or defy a foreign *savant*. The writings of the Tenth Guru were mostly consigned to the waters at the evacuation of Anandpur, throwing us back upon the non-Sikh sources, to fill the serious gaps or to interpret the Sikh History in true perspective.

6. The folklore has in all lands, been an impartial critic of men and things. It has, at all times, proved a veritable mine of many a literary and historical gem. It may, therefore, be well calculated to smoothe many an angularity and help to correct the excesses of personal equation in history. To revert to the character of the Maharaja, the verdict of tradition preserved both by *friend* as well as *foe*, fits in, much better and more consistently with the traits, on which History is perfectly clear, than the grossly sensual delineation of Sir Lepel Griffin. It was, therefore, under this belief, that the Khalsa Historical and Literary Society entrusted to me the task of collecting the tales of the Rawalpindi, Attock and Peshawar Districts. I have all along, been sensible of the difficulties in my way. With the limited means, time and skill at my disposal, I have been barely able to come across the few tales available at important centres, accessible to me.

7. In the tales presented in the following pages, not the least claim is made to original historical research. Whatever

seemed to belong to the domain of the probable or the rational and was found floating on the current of passing tradition, in imminent danger of being engulfed in the abyss of Time has been rescued and offered in these pages. The pruning fork has been used with the greatest caution under the fear, too often justified, that it is far more easy to *destroy* than to *improve*.

8. The religious beliefs of the writer himself stand apart from the convictions of the characters, where they depart from the monotheistic ideals of the Khalsa.

9. If this humble work succeeds in a measure, however slight, in forging another link of legitimate pride, for the members of the Khalsa Brotherhood, in their past glory to serve as an incentive to maintain their national characteristics of courage and chivalry and to hark back to the democratic and proselytizing ideals of their Fathers, the labour of the writer would have been amply justified. May this booklet prove a precursor of profound research by the student of history in a field, where the labourers are few but the prospects of a rich harvest many.

10. I owe a debt of thanks to S. Kirpal Singh (*Nirankari*) of the Postal Department for his collaboration in collecting the traditions of the Peshawar District. Grateful acknowledgments are also due to the Commandants of the Attock and Peshawar Forts for their kind permission to visit the same and to the Khalsa Scholar, Giani Sher Singh of the Rawalpindi Singh Sabha for his valuable suggestions and tales. S. Nihal Singh, the first Donor, other members of the Khalsa Historical Society, Bhai Mehr Singh of Pindigheb (Attock District) and other friends have rendered

valuable assistance in the preparation of the brochure.

HARNAM SINGH, M.A.

I.—BIBI HARSARNKAUR

The story that comes to us from the mouth of the Khaiber enshrines the name of a heroic sister who lived in the early twenties of the 19th Century, the memories of Mai Bhago. The Sikh chivalry and knightly deeds, which are sung from our pulpits, which extorted admiration from an iron-hearted adventurer, like Nadir Shah, and tears of gratitude from the Hindu wives, daughters and sisters at their rescue from the cruel clutches of the burly mercenaries of Kabul and Ghazni shine once more in Sardar Hari Singh and his gallant companions.

The invasion of the Khalsa host was a surprise—nothing short of miracle—to the Moslems who held the sway of the Peshawar valley ever since the defeat of Jaipal. S. Hari Singh succeeded where so many Generals before and after him had failed. He reduced the turbulent tribes to submission. Sardar Hari Singh's name has come to stay in the Afghan homes and even to-day, many a Pathan mother may be heard silencing her unruly child by the magical words 'Hari Raghle da' (Haria has come).

Peshawar and its suburbs have submitted to the yoke of the Khalsa but the Michni Fort was yet in the hands of the tribes. The Khan held up his head as one of the few chiefs of the country side, who had not till then felt the edge of the Sikh sword.

Surrounded by his tribal levees, he felt often tickled with the fancy that he was left there, to hold up the *horn* of Islam, at the sacrifice of the honour and blood of the Hindus.

One day a marriage-party including a Hindu bride and bridegroom was passing by the Fort. The Khan inquired of the party and coming to know that it was a Hindu marriage-procession returning after the marriage ceremonies, he gave summary orders for the bride to be seized and brought into the fortress. The wretched husband and all his companions entreated for mercy but to no avail. The '*Kafirs*' were plainly told that they had no right to maids of such surpassing beauty and grace of person as well as of mind, as were represented in the heroine of our story.

The bride bathed in tears clung again and again to her husband and prayed the Khan as father and brother to set her free but it was hoping against hope to expect mercy and justice at the hands of a lascivious bigot. How many are the horrors wrought in the world in the name of God and religion !

In cries and loud lamentations the cruel hand of man separated whom God had united at altar of Hymen. Can you, O Reader ! imagine the pangs of the loving wife deprived of her husband; the agony of the man bereft of his hearts' beloved; and the distress of the parents bemoaning the loss of their daughter ?

When the first shock of grief was over, the miserable men sat down for a council. The only plan which appeared to hold forth a possibility of success was that of an appeal to the Arms of the Khalsa. They, therefore, started for Peshawar. When they entered the city, they saw the Sikh Standard waving on the bastions. It was a new world for the incomers. The Moslem

S

oppression was no where, peace and order reigned in place of murder and anarchy. New atmosphere breathed new hopes and they eagerly inquired for the house of the Sirdar, the *Jathadar* (Leader) of the Khalsa.

The hour of evening, when the Khalsa prepares for *Rahras* (Sikh Vespers) was approaching apace, when the party approached the residence of the Governor. They asked for the Sirdar but were told in reply, that he had gone out for the evening congregation. The distressed persons went straight for the Diwan (congregation.)

In solemn silence, the prayers were offered. The Hindus were deeply impressed by the spectacle of the veteran warriors absorbed in devotion and meditation upon the name of the Deathless Creator. The combination of courage and piety; fighting and devotion was unfamiliar to the heart and mind of a Hindu. They felt now that there, if anywhere, on the earth, was to be the end of all their labours and sufferings.

When the closing hymn had been sung, they stood up and related their tale of woe. The heart of the Sardar and his warriors melted with pity and with one voice, they declared for and expedition for the chastisement of the Khan of Michni.

The enemy too on the other side, got scent of the impending attack. The crescent flag was set up for the 'Faithful'. The Khan himself, stood up as the champion of the Moslem world and got under him an enormous crowd to meet the Khalsa host.

The armies met under the walls of the fort. The Khan sent a word in the true spirit of a knight that it would be a useless waste of life to engage the two forces. "The issues" added he, "would be settled more easily if the Sardar agreed to his proposal." The Khalsa General consented to listen. "One

Moman"* remarked the Khan, "should fight against two 'Kafirs'† as laid down in the '*Shara*' (Muhammadan Law). Hence take one soldier more and I will be ready to try my steel on both."

"Nay", replied the Sardar, "not so in my books. The Khalsa should not shrink, if called upon, one to fight against a lac and a quarter. Go, O Khan ! make up the number, and then will I dash alone against thee and thy friends."

The Khan was taken aback at this retort and held a hasty consultation with his Commanders. What passed between the leaders of the 'Faithful' at that time will probably, be never known, but this much our chronicler tells us positively that the Pathan host delivered a furious attack upon the Sikh troops. For a moment, the Khalsa ranks seemed to reel under the blow, but the Sardar in an instant, sprang ahead of his troopers. The sight of their beloved leader infused courage which knew no breaking. They performed wonders and displayed miracles of valour. The events of that day roused the spirit of Kanishka from its abodes in the solitary recesses of the Frontier hillocks to witness the blood of the followers of Him*, who took his birth at the imperial capital of Asoka, shed so profusely in the cause of chastity and maidenly honour. Truly was it a spectacle for Gods to see and angels to admire.

As the sun wheeled to its cradle in the western seas, the last Pathan had disappeared and the Khalsa was singing the poeans of victory. The Pathan chief fell in the fight, the Sardar

* "Moman"=A Muhammadan Faithful.

† Kafir=Heathen term used by Moslems for non-Moslems.

*Guru Gobind Singh took his birth at Patna the site of ancient Patliputra.

repeated the Khalsa war-cry on the tower; the prison of the bride rang with the prayer of gratitude and an hour after, the husband and wife were breathing the air of liberty and reunion in the evening Diwan of the Khalsa cavaliers.

The Khan had passed away, the Prison walls were left a score of miles behind and the Sardar's army was, once more within the walls of Peshawar, but the heart of the rescued lady knew no rest in the old faith of her parents. The chivalry, the mercy and heroism of the Khalsa had left a lasting mark upon her heart. Day in and day out, she yearned for an hour, when she would be able to call the Khalsa knights as her brothers and Guru Gobind Singh as her father.

She eventually, stood up as a suppliant for the Sikh Baptism and was taken into the fold as *Bibi Harsarankaur*.

A few years more and the Jamrod outpost was besieged by the tribal hordes. The Sardar himself was lying ill of high fever in Peshawar. The handful of garrison in the fort could not hope to survive without speedy re-inforcements. The question was how to inform the Commander-in-chief of the whole situation. A council of war was held and while the opinions were divided, *Bibi Harsarankaur* came in among the brothers and prayed that the garrison could not afford to part with a single warrior, she might be entrusted with the duty of carrying the message to the Sardar. The Khalsa admired the courage of the sister and prayed for her success. She put on the skin of a big dog moved round and round the fort and then passed on to Peshawar, imitating at best the gait of the canine species. It was about mid-night when she reached the house of the Sardar. A gun was fired from the Bala

Hissar tower as the pre-arranged signal for the garrison. The Sardar, at once, ordered his army to march out, the bugles sounded a march and within a few hours, the outpost was relieved and the Afghan hosts routed.



II.—BHAÏ HARA SINGH

We remind the reader of the day, when the worldly glory of the Khalsa shone resplendent. Sardar Hari Singh and General Ventura have conquered the whole of the Peshawar side. The Barakzais have fled to their mountain fastnesses. Dost Muhammad Khan and his turbulent tribes are chafing under the loss of the Trans-Indus India. Unable to meet the Khalsa, at once in the fair field, they are biding their time to come down suddenly like their hill-torrents and invest the capital of the Frontier.

For months, the fiery tongue of the Mulla has proclaimed '*Jehad** the unfailing tool of all unprincipled fanatics on the Frontier. The Turks from far-off Turkey, the nomadic Uzbeks from Turkestan, the tough mountaineer from the hill recesses of Ghazni and Kandahar have been pouring through the sluices of the Khaibar to oust the Sikhs. One fine morning, the puny garrison of Peshawer finds itself invested under Sardar Hari Singh. A hasty message is despatched to Lahore and the Khalsa prepares to stand the seige. Day after day the Afghan flood bursts on the ramparts, only to be beaten back with terrible slaughter. The invaders understand fully that their chance of success lies in speed. If reinforcements arrive from the Punjab,

*Religious War for the Moslems.

there would be only one end,—a sad defeat. With redoubled efforts, therefore, repeated onslaughts are made but to no avail. Lead and steel are thinning the already meagre ranks of the defenders but the besiegers are as far from their objective as ever.

The disappointment of the invading host knows no bounds. One morning a Mulla, more powerful with his tongue than many of his peers, harangues his fellows on the virtues of martyrdom and holds forth the tempting joys of *Jannat** to all who should fall in fight against the *Kafirs*. Long shouts of “Ya Ali,” “Ya Ali” attest the eloquence of the preacher. The Khalsa within has grasped the full meaning. Sardar Hari Singh assembles his men and communicates the news that the bridge of boats on the Indus has already been destroyed by his own orders, adding :—

“Between the Punjab,” O Khalsa dear ! “and this town of Peshawar, stretch hundreds of miles and the swift current of the Indus. Escape you may not. There are only two courses open. Fight and die, earning good name in this world and welcome by the Father-Guru. Fly and take the surname of the “coward”. The sword of the Pathan or the torrent of the Indus will make an end of you; while the blood of your mothers and the baptism of the Saviour will cry shame! upon your name for all time to come. Choose O Khalsa ! whichever path you like. Would you fight in the name of the *Panth* ? Who knows the Father himself may come to your rescue ? Say brothers yea or nay.”

The Khalsa, Guru, and Panth are the words which are sure to fire the breast of a baptised Sikh with feelings of love, courage and sacrifice. The blood surged into the veins of the warriors.

*Moslem Paradise abounding in all kinds of delicious things and houses.

Their faces glowed with a divine enthusiasm, the swords glinted and a cry went up "Yea, O Sardar ! ready ever, the Khalsa must fight and die". The *Granthi* unsheathed his sword and offered the prayer which may be freely rendered thus :—

"... .. O Father Dear, O Protector of the Khalsa, the Help of the helpless, the Friend of the friendless ! Support Thy Khalsa, succour Thy weak and erring children. One thing the *Panth** beseeches Thee for. Grant them out of Thy Grace, fortitude to face the enemy and courage to fight on to the last breath. May Thy name be exalted ! May the glory of the Guru Khalsa wax and grow from higher to higher ! May in the name of Nanak—Guru—Gobind Singh the whole world be blessed !"

The prayer over, the Khalsa awaits with cool resolve, some extraordinary development from the side of the enemy. The surprise of the garrison may well be imagined when instead of an attack, thousands of the Afghans are piling whole trees round the city with the evident intention of reducing it to ashes and building a cordon of fire round the walls. Sardar Hari Singh's acute eye grasped the whole situation in the twinkling of an eye. The bugle sounds an attack, the Sardar rushes out at the head of his column and the Khalsa is out in an instant, for a death grapple with the Afghan myriads.

The wind begins suddenly to rise and the Sikh *Kripan* begins to ply. An hour more and the storm has abated when lo ! the whole battle-field is covered with the dead that the enemy has left giving the victory to the Khalsa.

*The collective name for all the persons embraced in the Sikh fold and, short of Khalsa Panth.

What is the secret* of this triumph which astonishes both the friend and the foe may be gathered from the short tale embalmed in the following lines, which has come to us from the town of Attock.

Bhai Hara Singh, the *Granthi* of the *Dharamsala* was a contemporary of Sardar Hari Singh. He was well-known for his devotion and piety. On the day of the battle, he went out, as usual, to Khairabad for a dip in the river. Coming out of the water, he was going to put on his clothes, when Guru Gobind Singh in visible form on the horse, familiar in all Sikh history, accompanied by the Five Beloved, came across the river and stood just close to the Bhai.

“What are you making here” ? was the query addressed to the *Granthi*, “when the Khalsa is in dire distress.”

“Ready,” replied the Bhai, “to do the bidding of the True King, may I know the commands.”

“Come then, let us go to the Khalsa, at Peshawar.” was the quick retort of the Father Guru.

It is said that Bhai Hara Singh returned to his home and told his family members that the Guru was waiting for him to take him on the expedition. He recited *Japji Sahib*, his prayers, covered himself with a white cloth and passed away from this life.

The ‘Panj Piyare’* the five men who stood up first to accept *Amit* (Sikh baptism).

III---SARDAR HARI SINGH'S COURAGE AND CHIVALRY.

One fine morning, my friend Sardar Gopal Singh and I started for a visit to Jamrod, an outpost on the Khaibar road. We were informed at the Peshawar Cantonment Station that the train was not to leave that day as the portion of the road washed away by the downpour of a day before had not been fully repaired. We were extremely disappointed and were going to give up the idea of the excursion when we caught sight of the mail tonga leaving for the place. We were offered seats, and of course, we were only too glad to accept them. The Pathan driver before leaving the Cantonment limits added four more men, while near Sardar Hari Singh's Burj, a couple more of the Border Police came to roost there---making up a total of nine for one tonga ! On the way, we saw the gangs under an overseer repairing the permanent way. The work seemed to proceed in a happy-go-lucky way. I wondered in my heart of hearts as to what was the use of a railway on which traffic could be held up for two days by a single downfall of rain.

After some three hours, we were set down at the gate of Jamrod fort. A soldier of the Border Police was standing at the door of the serai, with a loaded gun, with which he was fumbling all the time, while a soldier of the XXXV Sikhs was guarding the fort gate with only a thick stick.

We met our friend Sardar Harnam Singh of the Postal Department. He was allcourtesy and kindness. He placed at our disposal, all the available information, about the gallant Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa.

An Afridi thus related an anecdote of the great General. One day when he was brushing his teeth with a twig of *Phulahi* (*Acacia Arabica*), outside the fort, a Pathan of the Jam village, after which the Jamrod fort takes its name, was returning home with his wife. "Are you not afraid" remarked he, "that living in the land of the Pathans, you move about so fearlessly? What would you do, if some one were to kill you here, on the spot?"

"We are," replied the Sardar, "Sikhs of Guru Gobind Singh and he will help us in dire distress." "Come" retorted the other, "and have a fight. Accompany me to my village, let me leave my wife there and then will I have a trial of your prowess." "You will" added he, "be my guest there, none else will touch a hair of your head."

The Sikh chief agreed and walked with him to his native place. The Pathan handed over to the Sikh Commander a sword and a shield and took the same himself. The whole village turned out to see the sight. The Pathan was challenged to strike the first blow. He inflicted a mighty stroke, which was received on the shield by his opponent. The Sardar then had his turn. The blade cut the shield in twain and entering through the Pathan's left side came out on the right. The life was not yet extinct.

Our hero then took his fallen foe in arm; and tearing his upper turban tried to bandage the wounds. The dying Afridi was wonder-struck at this novel treatment and turned a question-

ing look on his gallant opponent.

“When whole” remarked the Sardar; “you were my foe and we fought, now that you are wounded and helpless, I owe it to you as a Sikh to nurse and comfort you.” The words produced a deep impression upon all. The Afridi commanded his men not to injure the Sikh Warrior and to take him in a litter, back to the fort.

The villagers when they came to know subsequently that the man of prowess was Sardar Hari Singh himself, bewailed their folly in allowing him to escape.



IV. THE LAST FIGHT OF AKALI PHULA SINGH

It is the hour of dawn on the 1st day of Chet, 1881 (Bikrami) corresponding to March 14, 1823, A.D.* The Khalsa army under the command of Maharaja Ranjit Singh himself is encamped in the open plains of Akora. The spy had brought overnight the disquieting news that the hordes of the 'Jehadis' (Moslems engaged in a religious warfare) have swollen to large dimensions and are entrenched in strong positions on the top of the Tarki hill, on the other side of the Kabul river, at a distance of some six miles from Nowshera.

According to the old traditions of the Khalsa, the holy volume (*Sri Guru Granth Sahib*) is opened and the chiefs of all the units take up their seats. After the Asa-di-war (morning hymns) a unanimous *Gurmata* (resolution) is adopted that delay would only augment the enemy forces and embolden him in his arrogance, besides affording an opportunity for Muhammad Azim Khan to join the tribes with his Afghan troops.

The Maharaja accordingly began to dispose of his army for the coming fight. Fifteen hundred of the troops are placed under Akali Phula Singh to deliver the attack from the east, three thou-

*I am indebted a good deal to the excellent Panjabi life of Akali Phula Singh by Baba Prem Singh of Hoti.

sand men are entrusted to Sardar Desa Singh, Majithia, and Sardar Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, to charge from the west. Generals Allard, Hari Singh and Rattan Singh and Prince Kharak Singh are given the command of 5,000 soldiers including six hundred Gurkhas to meet the frontal attack of the Ghazis. The rest of the forces are kept in reserve under the guidance of the Maharaja himself to reinforce as the situation demands.

All the forces begin slowly to march past their beloved sovereign riding his charger standing on a prominence. The contingent of Sardar Desa Singh is passing under review when a hasty spy drops in, bringing the news that the brothers of Muhammad Azim Khan have already joined the host at Tarki, while he himself with 10,000 Afghans and 40 big guns is collecting boats to cross the river to combine all the forces. The Maharaja is cast down at this intelligence, and desires to alter the *Gurmata* arrived at in the presence of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, postponing the offensive until the arrival of the heavy artillery, which if following under General Ventura.

When Akali Phula Singh hears that the Maharaja is cowed down and is anxious to act otherwise than in accordance with the unanimous *Gurmata* of the *Panth* in the presence of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, he is put out beyond measure, and seeks him at once 'yes,' broke in the Akali, "To-day the enemy is very strong indeed but it is against the traditions of the Khalsa to ignore a *Gurmata* when once passed.

The Maharaja urged in reply the argument favouring his point of view.

"But" rejoined the Akali, "we cannot and must not go

against a *Gurmata*, even if the number of the opposing forces be redoubled. The *Kalgianwala* is at the back of our resolution. He is with us to support us all times."

The Maharaja, however, reiterated that it was futile to move without heavy guns.

The Akali at this burst out saying "you are a prince, in the pride of power and pelf, you may do what you please. We are, however, not held by the trammels of the world and are, therefore, ready even to die to further our *Gurmata*. What better felicity for the Khalsa than martyrdom in defence of the honour of the *Panth*?"

With these words of farewell, the Akali turned his horse towards the Ghazi camp. He stood up and offered a prayer which in its intense fervour thrilled from the heart, of the man and quivering through the hearts' breasts of his companions rose on the wings of sincere devotion to the throne of Him, who receives and grants the yearning of fervent human-souls. Remembering in the well-known Khalsa style, the ten Gurus and the Holy volume, he continued in the words :—

"Seest Thou, O Kalghidhar Father, the Muhammadan army is in myriads. Thy Khalsa is going to launch against them with the sole desire of preserving the sanctity of Thy *Gurmata*. O Bajanwale (Lord of the Hawk) Satguru we are ready to lay down our lives in the cause. Our lives were consecrated to Thee on the day that we took Thy '*Amrita*'. It does not matter much, therefore, whether we keep or lose our bodies. Do Thou but this day save the honour of the Khalsa and grant victory to Thy August *Panth*."

The prayer pierced through the heart of every listener and steeled his men for prodigies of valour. Some pushed their horses into the river and others crossed on boats and gave the battle at once.

Thirty thousand Pathans were furious on seeing the dash of a handful of Akalis and sent a storm of bullets and balls through them. The Akalis were advancing with their characteristic impetuosity and dauntless courage but difficulties of ground and numbers seemed for a time, almost insuperable.

Their gallantry and the odds against which they were fighting so heroically, touched the heart of the Sikh Chief and he too decided to cast his lot with his brothers. He ordered the Sardars to back the Akalis according to the plan concerted in the *Gurmata*, while the Maharaja himself pushed forward. The battle now developed into a bloody struggle, and all the units strained all their nerves to wrest the entrenchments of the hill tops. The stone covers and rugged heights proved too much for even the indomitable valour of the Maharaja's troops. The Maharaja at this juncture, proceeded in person to second the efforts and directed General Allard to sweep the hill with his cavaliers. Still the objective was not achieved.

The hour of noon has come but still the Ghazis have not been dislodged. The 'Lion of the Punjab' seems at this moment, to wear the looks of despondency. But in a moment, the figure of the Akali leading his men on to the heights appears to turn the scales at once. The Chief gathers fresh strength, spurs his men to persevere and in all instant the Akalis burst upon the fortifications of their enemies. Just at this moment, a bullet breaks the knee-

pan of the "mighty man of valour," and passing through lays the horse dead. The Akali jumps up and backoning an elephant to be brought up, takes up his seat in the Howdah and begins to direct his men.

The struggle now develops into a hand-to-hand combat. The whole plain resounds with the cries of 'Akal' 'Akal' and 'Allah hu Akbar'. The friend and the foe get inextricably mixed up. The Pandemonium is let loose, on the world.

The newsman runs up at this juncture with the information that Muhammad Azim Khan endeavours to push on his army to the other side of the river to succour the Ghazis. General Ventura has fortunately just joined with his train of artillery. He and Sardar Hari Singh are directed to dispute the passage of the Afghan Chief and keep his men pinned to the ford.

The Gurkha regiment is at the same time, directed to charge the hill. The Akalis have in the meanwhile routed the tribes, 'You have,' shouted their leader, 'won the day but see that not a Ghazi escapes with life.' With a detour, therefore, the flying enemy is enveloped and cut down in thousands. A bullet from an Afghan carbine in this melee, pierces through the shoulder blade of the Akali commander, but it is not fatal and he continues to ply right and left. The Khalsa forces are giving a hot pursuit when another shot is lodged in the forehead; the hero reclines in the Howdah. A soldier takes the elephant aside, seats it down and feels the beloved Akali but the life is extinct.

Sardar Hari Singh and General Ventura returning with the news of the flight of Muhammad Azim Khan completed the work of the victory. This defeat of the *Jehadis* sealed the fate of the

Frontier but alas ! the Akali was no more.

The Maharaja cremated the body with full military honours, his war worn features were relaxed and in the funeral ovation the veterans of a thousand fights were standing bathed in tears.

A monument was raised to the memory of the hero with vast lands of the village Pir Salak for its upkeep. But alas the present manager is frittering away the estate at his own sweet will.



V.—SCENE OF SARDAR HARI SINGH'S DEATH WOUND.

Most of the people of Jamrod identify the place of death-wound of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, as close by or that of Ziarat, an enclosed shrine on the left of the road at a short distance to the south west in the Yaki (independent) part of the country.

The lineman, Yakut Khan who took us there is the native of the Jam village, which contains the shrine. The man took us further in. We had hardly gone for more than a hundred steps, when we were told that our way lay through a part of the population which was always ranged as enemies to the group to which Yakut Khan belonged. Next moment he pointed out to us a Garhi (mud fort) at a short distance, capped by a brass-gun, said to have consumed some eight maunds of the metal, as the residence of a Malik (chief), friendly to his people. We felt strange sensations when we listened to his tale of varying fortunes of war. At last we reached the *Hujra* (common resting place) of the village. Only half an hour ago, we were in the British territory where the possession of arms is a privilege extended to a few fortunate people. But here in the shade of trees, were perched some thirty people young and old on cots, covered with *wan* (plaited broom) and boasting in some cases of only one tattered shirt on the whole body, but carrying invariably a nice pistol or

a fine musket. No wonder they are a terror to the British subjects !

The younger brother of the Malik, a handsome youngman of twenty five, advanced two or three steps to receive us. He asked me in Urdu if he could be of any service to me I returned a polite reply and inquired as to which was his own residential house He pointed to a towering Garhi on the right adding that the fort was raised by the Sikhs who emerged therefrom to of give battle to the Afridis on the younder hills It was a mud fort fair dimensions with strong towers and is said to have fallen into the Afridis hands, when the country passed from the Sikhs unto the English.

He mentioned our people with respect, and told me that even in the present times, the hands of a labourer would come at a cannon ball reminding the family of the Sikh Masters.

The Malik himself Risaldar-Major Aghar Khan was reported to have been recently dismissed from the British army for his suspected defection in Mesopotamia, and was away to the Punjab to look after his squares on the canals.

Another tradition identifies the locality with a place, also named Ziarat at a distance of three miles, near a hillock, named *Sur Kamar*.

To me the second site appears the right one. The Sikh History has always been persistent in holding that the wounded chief rode back for a few miles before dropping down in the Jamrod fort but the first place is hardly even half a mile. Besides, it is improbable that the Afghans were allowed to approach so near before giving the battle Moreover, the Pathans themselves

would not have been so foolhardy as to come in a mass directly under the guns of the fortress.



VI.—STATEMENTS OF SHERZALLI KHAN (aged 106 years).

The following forts were in the hands of the Sikhs:—

(1) Jamrod, (2) Shankargarh, (3) Michni, (4) Bara,
(5) Sufed Jhanar and (6) Bala Hissar.

Sardar Hari Singh was in charge of Jamrod. Akbar Khan, son of Dost Muhammad Khan hearing that the Sikhs had invaded the Frontier came down to oppose them. After many fights, the Sardar came out and gave him a general battle. He was wounded near Ziarat and received five bullets.

When the Maharaja heard of the death of the Sardar he came up in person. Akbar Khan sued for peace. A treaty was concluded which set down the Khaibar Pass as the dividing mark between the two kingdoms of Kabul and Lahore.

The Sikh Sardars gave feasts to the Afghan chiefs when they came for visits. The Afridis were not at war with the Sikhs, except when goaded by outsiders. The Sikhs were always truthful and straightforward.



VII.—STRAY NOTES FROM NASIR KHAN

The following notes embody the information imparted to Sardar Kirpal Singh, Postal Department by one Nasir Khan, a weaver by profession and said to be 140 years of age. The hair of his head, it is asserted have changed from grey back to black. A new set of teeth too have sprung up. He declares himself to be an eye witness of the vicissitudes of Governments at Peshawar from the Barakzai times down to the present. He migrated from Peshawar to Chimkani and now resides in the Nathe village.

He repeats the story which is known in almost every Sikh household about the ride of the Great Maharaja Ranjit Singh through the Indus on his way to give fight to Akbar Khan, the son of the the Amir of Kabul after the demise of the Khalsa General, Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa. It will however, be found more interesting as coming from a Pathan.

The Maharaja, he states, once came with forced marches for the relief of the Sikh forces, which were encountering the hosts of the Amir round the Jamrod fort. The Khalsa forces came to a stand still on the banks of the Indus. The bridge of boats was already gone and no other means could be thought of, which could transport the troops to the other side, within the time

at their disposal. The Maharaja mused for a while and then rode right to the edge of the waters. He offered *Ardas* (Sikh prayer) to the Father Guru and addressed the river saying, "O Sovereign of the rivers, Maharaja Ranjit Singh asks thee to allow him passage for an hour and a quarter. Do so and he will try to please thee." He closed his eyes for a few minutes and when he opened them, the river had ebbed down. The Sikh monarch was transported with joy and put his horse into the river followed by his whole army. Only $\frac{3}{4}$ hour had passed, when the Maharaja thought that time was probably up and under this misconception, he left the river and went to the solid earth on the other side. As long as his horse was in the waters the forces could wade through uninjured but the river recovered its strength, when he was on the other side. A number of soldiers were thus lost in the rear. It was, however discovered that there was still half an hour left in the time. But it was too late. Large quantities of sweets were all the same thrown into the river.

During the Sikh times, Nasir Khan states, there was no system of bonds etc, in money dealings. The people were always anxious to clear off their debts, as soon as possible. The money-

Footnote.—I have visited the Attock Fort, and I did my best to question the people of the village to find out the exact locality where the tradition places this event.

There are two different versions. One locates the place some three miles up the river from the fort. The very strong argument in favour of this view is that the width is very large there. The other tradition is that he crossed at the place marked by a tower still standing in the mid-stream, where, has, from the times of Alexander, and perhaps earlier, often existed a bridge of boats.

lender only wrote up his figures on a wooden tablet which he washed away at the end of a week. All the debts were, however, paid up within the period. If a morsel stuck in the throat, it was considered that the lender was calling the debt to his mind. The borrower immediately hastened to settle his accounts lest some evil should befall him and his family.

General Avitabile administered justice in Gorkhatri. He was a man of very strong character showed great acuteness and common sense and was dreaded beyond any other man in Peshawar.

The subjects were very happy and the only institution considered irksome was the system of *Begar*. The people were free from sectarian prejudices. Intoxicants except wine were used by very few persons. The marriage sins were very rare. There were only five prostitutes in the whole town. They too made their living mostly by music.

The Bala Hissar Fort was raised under the orders of General Avitabile by the forced labour of Mahsuds and Afridis.



VIII.—SARDAR HARI SINGH'S CHIVALRY

The Khalsa General with a hundred picked cavaliers is encamped on the banks of the river Haro*. The *Hukeem* has just come out of the Chief's tent. His looks attract the attention of the soldiers on guard.

"How is our Sardar doing now?" asked one. "Is the dysentery as acute as yesterday?" inquired the other. "O we are so anxious tell us all O what a ———."

"Cheer up, O Khalsa dear !" replied the physician, "there is much improvement and our General would recover in a couple of days."

Blood returned to the cheeks of the warriors and the guard began to whistle with a light heart.

The sun had not moved in the heavens to the noon hour, before a woe—stricken Hindu hurried into the camp with distress depicted in every feature. Without any formal introduction, which is sometimes such an affliction in a "cultured society" the man burst out into ejaculations which showed his kinship with animals

*A stream in the Attock District known for its rocky bed and swift current in flood.

in pain rather than a man :— “Woe Worth the day ! cursed my race ! Help O !! Oh O Khalsa of the Guru ! Daughter, sister, wifeThe world in ruins ! Tyranny and oppression.....
O father, mother, dear !”

The cry of distress pierced the hearts of the Khalsa. The Sardar directed inquiries and consoled the man into giving an articulate account of his story.

“In the *ilaga* of Hazro” narrated he, “there is a Hindu village. One of our men had a slight brawl with a Pathan of a neighbouring hamlet. The tribes have joined the people, our cattle have been driven in, our men butchered, our shrines polluted and O Sardar Great ! our daughterssisters, wives wrested from their hearths and homes and led to a life of servitude and disgrace. The blood surged into the veins of the leader ; tears began to tremble in some eyes and a firm resolve was made to strike in the cause of the man, against the brute in human garb.

The *Hakem* at this stage broke in with the words :—

“Nay dear Sardar, master of your will you are, but a word from me———would you be pleased to listen ? Go ye will but not now The cruel disease will bring you down still more. Look you not, O *Dyalu* (magnanimous) General how pulled down you are ? Look up into the mirror, if you won’t believe a wr tch like me.”

“Right are you” interrupted the Chief, “but a day more will be the ruin of so many helpless ladies ! Stay I cannot now. Pray to the *Akal Purkh*. Ready O my Khalsa dear”?

“Yea at thy behest, ever,” rejoined the veterans.

With the movements of a whirlwind, the handful of cavaliers galloped towards Hazro. Some three miles yet and the smoke from a valley is caught by the eye of the commander

The troopers are beckoned to a halt. Five are detached for a reconnaissance. An hour more and the party returns. On their report, it is decided to deliver the assault after nightfall. The Khalsa Vespers are offered, the *Ardas* is sent up to the feet of the *Akal Purkh* and within half an hour the Khalsa steel is whistling in the ranks of the Afghan marauders. There is a panic and after losing a number, they fly leaving the fair prisoners with the Sikhs. The Sardar comforts them as his own daughters and sends them on to their several homes with safe convoys.



IX.—BHAÏ HARI SINGH'S STATEMENTS.

The following notes were taken from Bhai Hari Singh, a native of Khushkband, *Ilāqa* Jalalabad.

There is a considerable colony of the Sikhs in Afghanistan. They are now much better off in *Gurmat* than before, thanks to the commendable efforts of men like Baba Bhagwant Singh. There is a spring in Sultanpur, a village near Jalalabad, hallowed by the associations of Guru Nanak. In the times of Amir Abdur Rahman the last ruler of Afghanistan, the Sikhs were free to pay visits there ; big fairs were held on the occasions of Baisakhi and Sangrand (1st day of the month in Bikram calendar) and the Sikhs and Hindus bathed there in thousands. All this is to be no more in the regime of the present king, who has been, in some quarters, acclaimed as the model of a just monarch on account of his advice to the Indian Moslems to desist from the cow-sacrifice on the occasion of his last visit to India. There is indeed, a world of difference between the preaching and the practice ! The spring has now, been declared, a prohibited area and has been fenced in from the touch of the '*Kafirs*.'* The only ostensible reason, advanced for this order of the Afghan ruler is at its best, a flimsy one. The Amir one day had as a test, a cup full of the water poured into a foul pond, when it began to sparkle as pure pearls of a hill stream !

Being thus conscious of its wonderful powers, he began to use the same for drinking purposes. The Moslem priest declared that the water in which the 'Kafirs' bathed was not fit for the use of His Majesty. Hence went forth the fiat that the spring was to be preserved from the gaze of all but the Amir. Truly this recalls oft-repeated words :—

"Ai khubi-i-taba'-i-man to bar man bala shudi."

"To some people, their virtues serve as their enemies."

They hold that formerly, Guru Nanak's Chola' was also shown to the pilgrims. It is not exactly known where the relic now is, but the general surmise is that it is now kept at Dera Baba Nanak.

* (1). I think that sometimes back the Chief Khalsa Diwan was contemplating sending a memorial to the Amir, through the British envoy at the Court of Kabul but precious little is known of what came out of it. There can be no two opinions about the duty of Sikh Bodies in this respect. The sooner it is discharged, the better.

(2). A story appeared in all the Gurmukhi and Urdu papers, that soon after the confiscation of this fountain, a certain zemindar saw Guru Nanak in a vision and was told that a similar fountain was to appear in his land on the raising of a stone. The stone was raised and the fountain did appear. People now flock to this fountain and render their homage to the Divine Satguru (Baba Nanak).

X.—SARDAR NODH SINGH'S STRAY NOTES*

At the advent of the Sikhs into Pothohar†, Dangalli‡ was the capital of a part of this countryside with Bibi Mango (a Ghakhar lady) as its ruler. Muqarrab held the rest of the tract : —

“Attock Jhelum *darmeyane ai* Muqarrab *padshah*.”

“O Muqarrab, your rule extends between Jhelum and the Indus.”

This region was reduced by Sardar Chattar Singh of Attariwala. There was not a settled peace and not much of education. Double turbans were common, people were truthful and the Sikhs took *Amrit* when comparatively young.

The *Damdama*§ at Kallar (District Rawalpindi) belonged to Baba Attar Singh.

*An intelligent Sikh of Dera Khalsa, Kahuta Tahsil, District Rawalpindi, well-advanced in age.

†Districts of Rawalpindi and portions of Jhelum and Attock.

‡Now in ruins near Choha (District Rawalpindi).

§Damdama—originally the resting place of the Gurus, here applied to the resting place of Baba Sahib Singh. The word now signifies not only the memorial platform of Baba Sahib Singh but comprises also the residential buildings of Sir Baba Gurbakh Singh.

Once the hill tribes attacked the Sikh posts in the newly conquered Murree Hills in overwhelming numbers, Sardar Mul Singh, who held the fort of *Danah* near Ghoragalli fled with the whole of his detachment. The 'Lion of the Punjab' rebuked him for his poltroonery when he began to relate how he had saved the whole garrison, while others had lost heavily.

Gatka (wand-exercise) was the common evening pastime. Sword play and wrestling were practised on the sands of streams in the evening. -

In the Sikh War, Bhai Maharaj Singh, disciple of Bhai Bhagwan Singh of Kurrce, baptised and sent the Sikhs on to Chillianwala.

There were cantonments at Basali, Takhtpari, Attock, Hazro and Akora.

The Motto on the Khalsa flag was "*Akal Sahai*."



XI.—BHAÏ DYAL SINGH

It is sultry day in Malwa, when three brothers, Bhais Fatch Singh, Ram Singh and Dyal Singh hear the news of the Tenth Guru's arrival at Bathinda. A slight shower of rain has just fallen, bringing with it a hundred engagements for the farmer. The name of Guru Gobind Singh, the Guru Kalghidhar (the plumed Guru) is, however, on the wind and leaves no rest to the hearts of the brothers. They store their harrows and plough shares in a corner and take the road to Bathinda.

They had not proceeded far when a string of Sikhs joins from the right hand bridle-path. The Khalsa greeting '*Wahe Guruji ka Khalsa Wahe Guruji ki Fatch*' (the Khalsa greeting is of God and all victory is His) is exchanged and then one of the party bursts out into a hymn. The chorus is taken up by the whole party and the people on the roadside come out to see the unique sight of a Sikh party hastening to see their Father Guru. There is a devotion full of love which finds its expression in raptures of songs. There is a longing mingled with tremor born of desire and knowledge of our sins which stand forth before our eyes when we approach purity and holiness. The abandon which marks the gush of each throat, the rhythmic movement of the head, to and fro, eyes half-shut and tintured with red, point these men out as the devotees of the Prophet of Anandpur.

The martyrdom of the Sahibzadas* at Chamkaur and Fatehgarh, the breach of the Sikhs from the Guru and the sacrifice of Bhai Mahan Singh and Mai Bhago return again and again to the minds and lips of the party and almost half divide the time with hymns.

Lo ! at last, the town the--blessed Bathinda is sighted. Bathinda which but yesterday presented only brick walls of a fort to attract an adventurer or repel a coward has to-day, been changed to a Heaven of Devine love. The Guru's feet have hallowed its dust and converted it into a place of pilgrimage.

The walls and towers the barren land round the fort. and patches of green grass—all seem to tremble in the eyes of the party which has now been swelled to ten times its first dimensions

The first gate is reached and in eager impatience the questions are hurled upon the keeper, "Where O Brother! our Kalghianwala (Plumed Sovereign—Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji), where the Father of the Khalsa, where the Helper of the helpless, O tell us please, all this ?"

"Blessed Ye O Khalsa, O Brothers. dear, welcome a hundred fold," was the prompt reply, "enter the gates and just in the Courtyard, find the Holy Guru in the midst of the *Sangat* (congregation)."

The sun is nearing the end of its day's journey in the west and the trees begin to resound with the chorus of the birds returning to their feathery homes. A Sikh at a hint from the 'True

*Originally sons of Gurus, now reserved in common parlance for the sons of Guru Gobind Singh.

King' begins to intonate the divine hymn of *Rah-i-ras* (Khalsa Vespers). Bhai Fateh Singh and his two brothers lead the whole party to the feet of the Guru, who beckons them to take up their seats in the assembly. In the silence which knows neither sound nor whisper the heart of the assembly goes up to the feet of the Creator in that hour of dusk; which shares with the dawn, the virtue of naturally turning the soul of frail humanity to the Sustaining Power of the universe. How few are the persons in the world who are not touched by the sight of the glorious day-break or the silent departure of the sun ?

The closing prayer is offered and the new arrivals are offered to move near the Guru. All inquiries about the hearth and home are answered with due respect.

It has been announced that all who desire to join the Khalsa would be bestowed the gift of *Amrit** on the following day. Bhai Fateh Singh and Ram Singh are reminded of their pious ancestor, Bhai Bhagtu, whose name commands such respect among the Sikhs, and make up their minds to entreat the Guru to accept them too in the Khalsa Brotherhood. Bhai Dyal Singh vacillates. The old associations prove too strong for him for the while. He venerates the name of the Guru, he repeats his prayers and sings his hymns but he finds it too much to break asunder the old ties of caste, creed and society with one stroke. He halts between the two roads and for a time takes neither.

Bhai Fateh Singh implores the Guru to grace his village with his august presence. His request is granted and the Guru with his *Sangat* halts for a night before marching onwards.

*Sikh baptism.

The fourth brother of Bhai Fateh Singh, who was dead had left a widow. Who all the time after hearing the rumour of the Gurus visit to the village, was praying that the Merciful Father might out of His boundless bounty grant her heart's longing to see her himself at her house. She could not go to the house of Bhai Fateh Singh as she was not on good terms with him and there was no other way left except the one that the Guru's horse should neigh at her door.

Imagine O Reader ! the feeling of the *Sangat* when the Tenth Guru after his entry into the village turned the reins of his horse, straight to the widow's door. The lady darted out of her house at the sight of the horse and placed her forehead on the stirrup and bathed the Guru's feet with the tears of devotion. The Guru blessed her and asked her to compose herself. She seated the Guru in the house, on a splendid couch, offered him a cup of milk and also a *khes* (used both as a bed-cloth and coverlet) and a *Lungi* (a kind of head-gear or a loin cloth). All these were accepted, the Guru took the milk, cast the *khes* accross his shoulders and passed the *lungi* round his body.

It is said that it was on this occasion that he repeated the words :—

ਤੇੜ ਲੁੰਗੀ ਮੋਢੇ ਖੇਸ ! ਜੈਸਾ ਦੇਸ ਤੈਸਾ ਭੇਸ !

“*Lungi* accross his body, and *khes* across his shoulders, as the country, so the dress.”

After his return to the *Sangat* the Guru expressed his desire that Dyal Singh too, should take *Amrit*. This he repeated thrice, but did not receive a definite reply. On this, the Guru remarked—

“You have not accepted *Amrit* at the hands of the Guru himself but a time will come when you would take it at the hands of Rangreta† Sikhs” and marched out on his journey.

Dyal Singh's heart sank at the displeasure of the Guru. He brooded over it and at last at Bhagu, he fell penitent at the Guru's feet and prayed to be admitted into the Khalsa fold. It so turned out that there were then only five Singhs with the Guru including one who had the Rangreta blood in the veins. The Guru smiled and said. “One night has seen one Rangreta among the Five Beloved* five nights would have seen all five of the same class,”

†Rangretas form a low class in the Punjab Society.

*The title of honour applied to the Five chosen Sikhs, who administer *Amrita*.



XII—GURDAWARA BHAI JOGA SINGH.*

Bhai Joga Singh's Gurdwara is "par excellence," the worship place of the Peshawar Sikhs and Hindus of all shades of thought. It is said that even the Muhammadans are found paying homage to the shrine.

*Bhai Joga Singh was one of the most forward Sikhs of Sri Guru Gobind Singh. He had returned to his home in Peshawar to celebrate his marriage. The last of the nuptial rites (*viz.*, *Lawan* or circumambulations) was being gone through when a messenger arrived bringing the Guru's mandate to return at once, at the very sight of the order. Three rounds had been taken and the fourth was beginning when the Guru's man presented himself and announced the substance of the communication. Deaf to the entreaties of his relatives and setting his face against the voice of love clamouring at his own heart-strings, he hied forth in obedience to his master's call. For further details we would refer the reader to chapter 36, part (*Rut*) IV of Bhai Santokh Singh's '*Suraj Parkash*'. Till very recent Times the management of the Gurdawara vested in Sanatanists (Hindus of old type). A few years back a dispute arose with the that the control passed into the hands consequence of a committee of the gentlemen who are Sikhs. This is a step in the right direction and it is hoped that as full obedience to the commands of Sri Guru Gobind Singh is earnestly strived at by the congregation the management shall become a really Khalsa or immaculate.

There is a well too, just adjoining the Gurdawara. On account of an excess of sweets that are thrown in by the visitors the water is of whitish colour and rather mawkish in taste but the people attribute great efficacy to it and take it most readily in small quantities.

It is said that the daughter of one of the Durrani Governors took ague, which resisted all cures and the prayers of all the saints in the city. She in utter distress prayed to God to either restore her to health or to give her an exit from the world. The same night, she saw in a dream the figure of Bhai Joga Singh who directed her to his well and asked her to bathe in the waters thereof. As the morning dawned, she directed her footsteps to the Gurdawara and bathed as desired. The fever is said to have left her the same day. Her belief in the sanctity of the place gained stronger and she made it a point to visit the shrine at regular intervals.

Her father was ignorant of all this, until the *Qazis* and *Mullas* carried the information to him. He questioned his daughter who told him the whole truth. The *Fativa* (order of the Moslem priests) was given that inasmuch as she worshipped a *Kafir's* tomb, she was culpable in the eyes of the Prophet's Law. The Governor was in a great dilemma. On the one hand, he could not offend his dearly loved daughter, who was yet on the way to convalescence, while on the other, his ears were being dinned in by the importunities of the 'fanatics'. The Governor tried to dissuade her from the homage of the place. She, however, was firm in her own resolve and to the remarks of her father replied, "How can I give him, up, who has given me life and health?"

Tired of soft words, he at last thought of a device. He ordered his men to watch her way and to frighten her by blank cartridges but not to injure any one of her party.

Accordingly, next morning when the girl with her guard proceeded to the well as usual, her path was challenged by a party of armed soldiers who fired blank shot. Her men on the other side fired bullets causing several casualties.

Foiled in this stratagem, he bethought of another. He issued an order that every one should pronounce 'Joganshah'* instead of 'Joga Singh' and gave it out that it was a Syed Faqir who was so powerful. A mosque was raised by the side of the Gurdawara and a well also was dug to carry conviction to the ignorant Moslem masses.

They say that there is at a distance of some three miles from Peshawar, a masonry work, commonly known as Bhai Joga Singh's tower, marking the spot where he used to resort daily for holding communion with God. A big fair is held there on the first Sunday following the *Holi* festival.

*The Sikhs at least should not join the Moslems in calling the place by the name which perpetuates a piece of chicanery."



XIII.—DHARAMSALA GURU NANAK SAHIB.

It is not known from any reliable source, why the place was so named. Only this much the local tradition holds that in the time of the Durrani Chiefs, one of the Governors began to use the place as a stable. It was pointed out that the shrine was Sikh place of worship but he would not listen. It is said that the horses began to die one after the other. The Governor relented and restored the place to Sikhs. The present building of the Gurdwara owes its existence to the well-known Sikh Saint of Rawalpindi, who passed under the cognomen of 'Sat Kartar'. The *Granthi* calls himself *Nanak Bansi Sikh.'

*Who these Nanak Bansi Sikhs are one does not know. The name seems to have taken its birth in a taste for novelty in the *Granthi*.



XIV. BHAI LACHHMI RAM'S RELICS.*

The lady guardians of the several relics to be mentioned here are said to be in the family of one, Bhai Lachhmi Ram, who is claimed to have been an attendant of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. How the relics came into his hands it is impossible to ascertain but we could not give credence to the story that they were the gifts made to him by the Guru. The strongest point for this view

*Preserved in a house known as Bhai Lachhmi Ram's house in the Ganj Muhalla of the Peshawar city.

The descendants of Bhai Lachhi Ram are traced in the various towns of the Frontier, and in Tirah, Buner, Swat, Makhad, Thal, etc. They receive offerings in all these parts. The only representative of the family of Peshawar is a youngman, named Karam Singh who is said to hold strong Samajic views. The relics are, however, carefully preserved by the ladies.

They felt nervous at my queries. It was amusing to understand that their chief fear was that I was perhaps arranging to divert people from their place by creating semblances of their mementoes ! I tried to re-assure them and I believe that their misgivings were much allayed.

is that it is absurd to suppose that the Guru would have given him as gift the *Hukamnamas* (orders) which were addressed to people other than Bhai Lachhmi Ram. The other point is that the addressees were no doubt Sikhs themselves. How they should have willingly parted with such dear mementoes of the Guru, from whom they are said to have emanated, one cannot understand. The real facts seem to point out in one direction. Bhai Lachhmi Ram is believed to have been a man of long travels. He came across the relics in his journeys and knowing their value, for posterity transmitted them on to his descendants, with care.

Now to come to the relics.—

1. A *Dastar* (turban) of almond-coloured muslin worked in silken thread.

2. A *Jama* (loose-coat) of *khaddar* (coarse cloth of the Indian manual labour) decorated with patches of muslin in the fashion of olden times. It is said that the *Jama* is only the cover of the famous coat now claimed to be at Dera Baba Nanak, which is adduced by some Moslems as the proof of their allegation that Guru Nanak was the follower of the Arabian Prophet.

3. One shoe of the Deccan type about 8 inches in length with a strong sole, shaped like a sleeper.

4. In the middle of a beautifully ornamented sheet of fine stout material ornamented with fruits and flowers made of paper the first *Pauri* (stanza) of *Japji Sahib* (The Sikh Matins) written in a flowing style associated with the arrow head, with which the Tenth Guru used to sign.

5. *Hukamnama**, said to be that of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji :—

*Written order by the Gurus to congregation or individuals.

The words in the 5th line “ਤੁਸਾਂ ਜੋਗ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਜੀ ਸੁਖ ਰੱਖੇ” refute the theory of its authorship. The most probable guess seems to be that it was probably by Banda in his later days.

6. Second *Hukamnama**:—

The date Katak 1, Sambat, 1764, Bikrami and the words, “ਅਸਾਂ ਜੋ ਮਾਤਾ ਕੋ ਮਧੇ ਛਿਮਾਹੀ ਬਖਸ਼ੇ ਹਨ” point out that probably, the *Hukamnama* was issued in favour of Mata† Sundri or Mata Sahib Devan before the absorption of Guru's soul in the Devine in 1765 Bikrami. The only words militating against this theory, are :—“ਜਦ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਹਲੂਰ ਆਵਤੇ ਤਦ ਸਰਬਤ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਬਨਿ ਕੈ ਜਰੂਰ ਆਵਨੈ” The Guru Ji could never have gone to Kahlur after this date. But the point does not present in very great difficulty and may be explained in ways, more than one.

*Owing to very excessive cost of printing and paper, it has not been found possible to get blocks of photos of these *Hukamnamas* and thus increase the price of the book. Endeavours would be made to supply this omission in the next edition.

†The word ‘Mata’ or mother is used with the names of the wives of the Gurus.

XV. GURDAWARA KAKRAN.*

The one relic preserved in this Gurdawara consists of a pair of shoes made of deer-skin and said to have been made a gift to Bhai Sukha Nand the ancestor of the family. He begged and received the thing as a memento from Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

Bhai Damodar Singh, the present representative is an old man of seventy five. He showed us the shoes in an iron box. We were not allowed to touch them as they crumbled on account of frequent handling.

The following notes about the Sikhs and Sikh times were taken from him :—

1. There were three superior officers, at Peshawar, one holding the charge of Military Affairs, the second of Civil Administration and the third of State Treasuries :

*On a marble slab at the top of the entrance gate runs the inscription in Persian characters

AKAL SAHAI

"Bafazl Akal Sarkar Faiz Asar Maharaja Ranjit Singh dar Sambat 1891 Raja Bikramajit baldh Peshawar tashkir karda Qila ja namud."

2. The Government was just and peaceful.

3. The Peshawar fort was built under the supervision of one Nihal Chand.

4. The soldiery consisted of the Sikhs alone.

5. Once when the Maharaja was returning to the Punjab, the Pathans of the village, Saido were offering the cow-sacrifice. The Sikhs remonstrated pointing out that they should not injure the feelings of their Hindu fellow-subjects but they were obstinate. The result was a fight in which the Sikhs though far outnumbered, were victorious after a bloody contest.



XVI. MEHTA MUL SINGH'S* HOUSE.

We were shown a nice double-edged dagger (*Khanda*) with a golden handle and the blade of the finest steel. The lady keeper was much agitated when I asked permission to touch the holy relic and hence I was content to admire it at a distance.

Next we requested for a sight of the *Hukamnama* said to be in her possession. This was done much reluctantly. The lady remarked that she was often prompted to inquire why I was taking the pencil notes. "Do You," She at last broke in, "want to make a copy of the relics to divert pilgrims." A suppressed smile came to my lips and I explained to her the object of my mission but I hardly think that she was satisfied.

The *Hukamnama* runs as below :--

ੴ ਗੁਰ

ਸੀ ਗੁਰ

*In the Karimpura street, lane of Mehtas.

The age and shape of a roll in which it is kept, account for the tatters of paper and are likely rendering it impossible to decipher it after sometime more.

I was then shown eleven pictures two of the Tenth Guru and one of each of the first nine Gurus in old Moghal style of painting. On the whole, they seemed more expressive than any other set of paintings, with which we are familiar. It is said that there were three pictures of Guru Gobind Singh ji, but one was removed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He exerted himself to take possession of the portraits but the owners would not part with them for any consideration, and he succeeded in taking away only one of them.*

We were now shown an Urdu copy of the Sikh Scriptures. As an introduction, there is a *Hukamnama*, the legible portion of which reads thus :—

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ

ਗੁਰ ਸਹੀ, ਭਈ..... ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਹੁਕਮ-
ਨਾਮਾ ਦੇਖਦੇ ਹੀ ਆਵਣਾ, ਦਰਸਨ ਵੇਖਣੇ ਜੀ ਭਈ ਕਲਿਆਣ ਤੇ ਸੁਖ
ਹੋ ਸਰਬਤ ਸੰਗਤ ਸਾਰੀ..ਮਨਤ ਭੇਟ ਸਭ ਲੈ ਕੇ
ਆਵਣਾ..... ਦੇਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਨੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ

*The gossip says that later on S. Hari Singh too strove to secure the pictures and when refused was chagrined and left money bags at the door indicating that he was displeased, the owners, however, would not move an inch and distributed the contents among the poor.

ਹੋਏ.....ਆਦ.....ਕਰਨੇ ਬਹੁਤ.....
ਭਾਈ ਭਗਤ

On the next page, there is the following table of the dates of the demise of first nine Gurus :—

Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji (1st King)
1596 Asu Wadi 10.
Sri Guru Angad Dev ji (2nd King)
1609 Chet Sudi 2.
Sri Guru Amar Das Ji (3rd King)
1631 Bhadon Sudi 15.
Sri Guru Ram Das Ji (4th King)
1638 Bhadon Sudi 4.
Sri Guru Arjan Sahib Ji (5th King)
1663 Jeth Sudi 4.
Sri Guru Har Gobind Ji (6th King)
1702, Chet 5.
Sri Guru Hari Rai Ji (7th King)
1718 Katak Wadi 9.
Sri Guru Hari Krishan Ji (8th King)
1721 Chet Sudi 14.
Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Ji (9th King)
1732 Maghar Sudi 5.

A noteworthy feature of this volume* is the absence of Ragmala at the close. It seems to have been written in the Urdu script at the request of the *Sangat* at Peshawar as the Gurmukhi script was not much known in these parts.

*The first *Pauri* is said to have been written under the hand of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji by an arrow point. It much resembles the authentic signatures of the Saviour in the copy of *Panj Granthi* with Bhai Sahib Bhai Arjan Singh of Bagarian.

XVII. BHAI LATKAN.

Latkan known later on, with the honourable addition of 'Bahi' took his birth in an obscure family in the town of Pindi-gheb (Attock district) which was then, an insignificant place going under the name of "Pindi Malik Shahbaz." We have tried to come at the names of his parents and the chronology of events but even his own descendants do not seem to have troubled themselves with any such inquiries. They therefore can lend little or no assistance in this direction. The subsequent history of the Bhai leads us to only an approximately correct conclusion that by the year 1756 Bikrim era (1700 A.D.) he was a grown up youngman. This too we can be well nigh sure of, that in his native village he received little or no education. His father had joined the great majority while he was even a child ; whereas his mother's name, as usual in the east, is not for once, mentioned in all the tradition that trickles down to us through the diverse strata of time, particularly variegated in this part of the country on account of the constant inroads from west. The turmoil was stilled only when the strong arm of Sardar Budh Singh, introduced order. Bhai Latkan was therefore from an early age, left to himself, liable peculiarly, as is natural in the case of all orphans, either to virtue or altogether to vice. His mind selected the happier of the two lines of life. One day as the *Sangat* (congregation) of Peshawar and other Frontier

towns was passing through Pindigheb on its way to Anandpur* he too longed to form one of the party. He was master of his own will and for once, the disadvantage of being without a parent appeared as an advantage rather than otherwise as there was none to withstand his resolve. He was, therefore, with little effort, allowed to join the *Sangat*.

At Anandpur, he arrived as a curious pilgrim but stayed as a storm-tossed mariner in a haven of repose. Day in and day out his companions urged him to return to the country of his birth but his heart was set on the lotus feet of the Guru and would not permit him to depart. Days, weeks and months passed he was seen wherever the Guru was. Early in the hours of the drawn or late in the *Diwan* (congregation) of Rab-i-ras, in the hunt or among the Sikhs his one thirst was to have the Guru in sight. One day he accompanied the Lord of Anandpur in hunting. His service so pleased the Guru that he granted him four things :—

- (a) A *Khanda* (double-edged dagger).
- (b) A copy of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.
- (c) A *Hukamnama* and
- (d) A silken shirt.

It appears that soon after this, the Bhai returned to his native place and had a Gurdawara built outside the town, installing his copy of the Scriptures therein. The present building on the site is masonry work in hewn stone and mortar situated in the heart of the town and known as *Bari Dharamsala* (Great Dharam-

*The route lay from Kohat to Jand, from Jand to Fincigheb, and thence to Anandpur *via* Chakwal.

sala). Bhai Gopal Singh, one of the few enthusiastic Sikh young-men in the town takes a keen interest in the religious services of the Gurdawara.

By the lapse of time the copy of the Scriptures is said to have been worn out and the *Sangat* thought of consigning it to the waters of the Indus. Baba Ratan Das, an *Udasi* Sikh, however, who was then living in Pindigheb begged the same from the congregation and making his abode in Ziarat, Tahsil Pindigheb, began to mend the leaves. He raised also a Gurdawara there in the memory of the work. He repaired next to a village named Chakki, Tahsil Pindigheb reposed the Holy volume there and stayed there for some time.

After the demise of Rattan Das, the volume came into the hands of Nanak Das and after him into those of Rattan Das his brother disciple. At last by the efforts of Sardar Mehr Singh, the indefatigable Sikh, who has worked so zealously in the cause of the Khalsa Middle School, Pindigheb has secured the same for the school and deposited it again in the *Bari Dharamsala*.

we have had an occasion to visit the historic Gurdawara and felt it an honour to be allowed to touch the volume. Judging from the life of the paper used in book-making in these times, one would hardly believe that the writing is as old as it is said to be, but the patches on the corners traceable to the feeling hand of the *Udasi*, the nice Kashmir paper and the comparison of the two inks lead us to the conclusion that the assertion may be a true one. The table of contents bears in the date in the following words :—

Page 25. “ਸ਼ੇਨ ੧੭੪੫ ਮਿਤੀ ਮਘਰ ਬਦੀ ੧੦ ਪੋਥੀ ਲਿਖਅਤੇ”

“The book was written in 1745 (Bikram) on the 10th lunar day of Maghar.”

How we longed to see the signatures of our Saviour but alas ! for the Hindu custom, which the Sikhs of later times adopted of putting saffron thumb marks on to the Guru's signatures, the three pages 26 to 28 one of which is said to have carried the signatures of our Father Guru are no longer there. They were worn out on account of the action of saffron and replaced by three blank leaves which now bear the yellow marks. We wish that some one had the intelligence of taking care of the leaf of signatures. The volume is a copy of Bhai Banno's volume and carries at the end, a formula for the preparation of ink.

The *Khanda* (two-edged dagger) is alleged to have been taken away by the late Hon'ble Sir Baba Khem Singh, Bedi, and is said to have been now in the possession of his son, Sir Baba Gurbakhsh Singh. One or two people believe that it was removed by Lala Hari Chand, Tahsildar. We addressed Sir Baba Gurbakhsh Singh on the subject. We have received the reply that it is not with him.

Hukamnama. We give here below, the words of the *Hukamnama*, so far as it is legible. The paper along the line of creases has in most places, fallen off. We have advised the keeper to preserve the same in a glass-frame if possible. Would that as Society like our own or Educational Committee, Chief Khalsa Diwan, gird up their loins to collect and conserve all the few precious relics that were left now and which are fast disappearing.

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀਓ.

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਆਗੇਆ ਹੈ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਗਿਰਦਾ ਅਟਕ ਕਾ
ਗੁਰੂ ਰਖੈਗਾ ਸੰਗਤ ਮੇਡਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਹੈ ਰੂਗੁ ਜਪਣਾ, ਜਨਮ ਸਉਰੇਗਾ
ਰੁਪੈਯੇ ਥਾਨ ਇਕਸ ਇਕ ਸਉ ਪੰਜੀ ਜਮਾਤ.....ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਨੇ
ਮਹੀਨਿਆਂ ਕੇ ਬਖਸ਼ੇ ਹਨਿ ਹੁਕਮ ਦੇਖਦਿਆਂ ਦੇਣੇ ਫੰਗ.....
ਪਿੰਡੀ ਗਦਾਈ ਕੀ ਸਰਾਇ ਜ਼ਿਲਾ ਅਟਕ ਨੇ ਪੰਜਾਹ ਸਹਬਾਜ਼ ਦੀ ਪਿੰਡੀ
ਦੀ ਸੰਗਤ ਦੇਣੇ ਥਾਨ ਪਝਤਰ ਗਦਾਈ ਕੀ ਸਰਾਇ ਕੀ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਦੇਣੇ

੧੭੬੧ ਮਿਤੀ ਭਾਦ ਤੇ ੭ ਸਤਰਾ ਦਸ ੧੦

We cannot say what was the exact object to further which the *Hukamnama*, if genuine, was issued. The place where the signatures are said to have been does not show clearly a line to establish that there have ever been the marks of the Tenth Guru's pen or arrow-points. But it is probable that the Guru might have authorised Bhai Latkan to raise money for the building of the Gurdawara and for similar objects, calculated to propagate the teachings of the Gurus.

This *Hukamnama* too is now, by the exertions of Sardar Jagat Singh, Sardar Mehr Singh and other members of the *Sangat* in the possession of the managers of the Khalsa School, Pindigheb and deposited along with *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* in the Bari Dharamsala.

The silken shirt is no longer traceable anywhere.

The descendants of Bhai Latkan are living in Pindigheb and other parts of the Attock district. They take pride in the appellation of Bhai which is still used with their names.

XVIII.—BHAÏ PAIHINDA.

The theme of this story traces his birth-place to Usman Khattar, District Rawalpindi. He did a bit in the way of shopping but he led the people in works of charity and devoted most of his time to the service of the *Sangat*. He once placed himself at the head of a party and proceeded to have a sight of the Sixth Guru at Amritsar. The Guru was as yet of tender age. He climbed up his shoulders and showed much liking for Bhai.

After sometime, Bhai Paihinda returned home and began to employ his time still more in works of charity and devotion. He had four sons two of whom, Bhai Gulab Singh and Bhai Punjab Singh are said to have fallen among the "Forty *Muktas*" (Forty emancipated) at the never to be forgotten battlefield of Muktsar.

After his Amritsar visit, Bhai Paihinda himself was known far and wide for his spiritual exaltation. The people in general, irrespective of creeds resorted to him for the fulfilment of their most cherished desires.

It is said that on one occasion, he started out of the town in company with other inhabitants. They had not proceeded far when the Pathans surrounded them. He turned about and saw a mud wall close by. He got up there, with his companions and began to goad it to gallop as one would do a horse. The wall

began to move and the Pathans repented of their sin of attacking a man of such holiness.

On another occasion a Hindu of eighty years approached him with the desire that he might be blessed with a son. He told in reply that the Guru might grant his wish but the son was to be baptised a Sikh. Needless to say that in due course, his wife presented him with a son.

Once it is said this region of Pothohar and Dhani (comprising a major portion of the Rawalpindi and Jhelum districts and a small part of the present Attock district) was visited by a severe famine.

The people in search of grain came into Usman also. Soon after they had entered the village, they inquired after the name of any liberal *sahukar* who would lend them foodstuffs freely. Some one with a humorous turn of mind named Bhai Paihinda. It was a novel sight, in fact, when a crowd of men with a long string of bullocks and donkeys appeared before his modest shop. For a moment, both the Bhai and the strangers found themselves in a fix. He, however, soon recovered and consoled the people saying that the Almighty would turn the things to their hearts' content.

The Bhai pointed to a basket full of grain and asked the new comers to weigh out whatever they needed. The tradition says that for a live-long day the weighings proceeded, but the basket knew no emptying. The incident naturally spread his reputation every where in the neighbourhood and he was therefore looked up to with a feeling of profound reverence.

Yet another anecdote tells us that a merchant ship carrying a cargo of precious merchandise came to a standstill. There was

among the crew, an inhabitant of the village Banda. He induced the master of the ship to vow offerings to Bhai Paihinda. This was done. The ship was set afloat and the merchandise reached the harbour. The merchant came in person to take the promised amount to the man whose memory had helped him at a time of dire distress. Seeing that a mean looking shop keeper was all that was shown in the person of Bhai Paihinda, his belief was somewhat shaken and he placed before him only a fraction of the amount, vowed as an offering. The Bhai returned it and reminded the man of his pledge. The merchant repented of his disbelief and presented the full sum.

He journeyed down to Anandpur to see the Father of the Khalsa. For how long, he stayed there, we do not know. The Guru it is said, gave him a copy of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* and *Pransangli* which are preserved in a Gurdawara at Rawalpindi in the charge of the last descendant of the illustrious man--Bhai Boota Singh, Hakim.

Bhai Paihinda left his home and went into the wildernesses of Hazarah and Agror. He practised meditation first on a stone slab at a place called Bisbani in the *ilaka* of Khanpur. Where he went thence, and how he passed out of this life, we do not know.

Of the other relatives of Bhai Paihinda, Mai Viro, the wife of his son, Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh, deserves a prominent mention. She is said to have been a pious and charitable lady. Sardar Milkha Singh granted her 25 acres. Mai Viro's Ban originally a large pond and a work of great public utility in those days--when the scheme of water-supply could not be thought of, is a monument to the public spirit of the lady. The pond is now, a bricked

tank but the old name clings to it for all times. It is a pity that the tank does not receive a fresh supply of water at proper intervals and it is now for the greater parts of the year, nothing better than a festering pool and the most fertile ground for the breeding of mosquitoes. Would our City Fathers wake up and realize their duty towards this historic work.

It is said that the ashes of Mai Viro's and Bhai Piyara Singh were buried near those of Sardar Milkha Singh, somewhere on or near the site of the Gurdawara of Sri Guru Singh Sabha in the Rawalpindi city—a fitting resting place indeed for the earthly remains of those who yearned so eagerly for the Gurus during their lifetime.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who in his Sikh-like humility and reverence for the sacred relics, yielded to none, paid homage to the Holy volume in the Gurdawara, when he halted at Rawalpindi on his way to Peshawar and made the grant of the village Deg as an assignment.

Bhai Boota Singh, mentioned above, is a respectable physician. He has erected the Gurdawara anew in fine brickwork and devotes much personal attention to its upkeep. There is a fine Gurdawara with a *muafi*, at Usman too.



XIX. BABA KHUSHAL SINGH (*alias* BISHAN BISHAN.)

Baba Khushal Singh, whose family is in these days, represented by Baba Jaggat Singh of Rawalpindi claims descent from Baba Sawan Mal, a nephew of Sri Guru Amar Das Ji, who is identified with the gentleman bearing this name, deputed for building timber to the Guler State, as described in the "Suraj Parkash" (*Pritham Ras, Amrit Bichar Parsang Tis Ansu*).

It is said that the mountains of the State were much frequented by evil spirits. The Guru coming to know of this, granted a handkerchief, which possessed potency against all evils. Baba Sawan Mal had not been long in the State when the Raja's heir died of disease. The Baba was requested to restore him to life. He fixed his mind upon the Akalpurkh (Deathless God) and drenching the handkerchief in water squeezed it out on the face of the dead man. By the grace of the Guru, he came back to life. The Raja assembled all the people, distributed the Sacred food and had a Gurdawara built on the spot, and granted the village in *muafi* (assignment.)

One of Baba Sawan Mal's descendants. Baba Daulat Rai left Batala, his ancestral seat of *Gaddee* and began to roam in what now forms the Hazara district. At last he settled down at a place,

named "Pindi Kot Bhai Kirpa Ram." Nawab Najibullah Khan, the ruler of the place expressed his longing for a son. Baba Daulat Ram pronounced his blessing. After a year, and a half, a son was born to him who was named Muhammad Khan Tarin. The Nawab out of gratitude assigned four villages and offered Rs. 2,000 in cash. Baba Daulat Rai after a few years more, gave everything to his eldest son, Mushtaq Singh and himself went to Kashi and spent full three years there.

After sometimes, Baba Mushtaq Singh took up his residence at Rawalpindi. Sardar Milkha Singh who was then recognised as the representative of the Sikh *Misl* (confidarcy) of Gujrat, treated the Baba with every mark of respect and consideration and assigned four villages Bhadana, Dhok Nur, Dhok Hayat, and Naulakha and a well, together with the village of Hori and a Chak.

Baba Khushal Singh was invited to Rawalpindi by his elder brother Mushtaq Singh, when the whole of this region was conquered by the Sikhs. The Baba got the village of Quzian in exchange for the other villages. When the foundation of Haripur was laid by Sardar Hari Singh, Baba Khushal Singh, was invited to lay the foundation stone.

On Sardar Milkha Singh's taking Ram Kund, Baba Mushtaq Singh was given the charge of the administration of the place and its vicinity. Later on (probably after the death of Sardar Milkha Singh) when Maharaja Ranjit Singh took this region, he entrusted the *ilaga* of Rawalpindi to the Baba. His *jagirs* at this time amounted to something like Rs. 30,000.

Baba Mushtaq Singh during his lifetime assigned the *Gaddee* to Baba Attar Singh, son of Baba Khushal Singh.

Baba Attar Singh was pre-eminently, a charitable man. He maintained a free kitchen for the poor, at Rawalpindi. When Maharaja Ranjit Singh was marching towards Peshawar with his forces to meet Dost Muhammad Khan's troops, he made a halt in the town and coming to the Gurdawara of Baba Attar Singh made the customary offerings and desired to have a sight of the copy of the Scriptures. which bore the signatures of the Fifth Guru. This done the Maharaja next desired to have a *Shabad* read to fortify his heart for the coming struggle. The following *Shabad* came up for reading.

ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥ ੪ ॥ ੧੦

ਜਿਨ ਕੀਨੇ ਬਸ ਅਪਨੇ ਤੂੰ ਗੁਣ ਭਵਣ ਚਤੁਰ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ ॥
ਜਗ ਇਸਨਾਨ ਤਾਪ ਥਾਨ ਖੰਡੇ ਕਿਆ ਏਹ ਜੰਤ ਵਿਚਾਰਾ ॥

.....
.....

ਸੰਤ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਮਹਾਂ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਇਆ ਸਗਲੇ ਬੰਧਨ ਕਾਟੇ ॥
ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮ ਨਾਨਕ ਧਨ ਪਾਇਆ ਅਪਨੇ ਘਰ ਲੈ ਆਇਆ
ਖਾਟੇ ॥

The Maharaja was overjoyed to hear the *Shabad* indicative of victory. He wanted to read the *Shabad* himself, with cloth round his neck, he knelt before the Holy Volume and immediately ordered Diwan Dina Nath to assign two villages of Rupa and Nun bringing about Rs. 2,000. He made presents also of shawls, costly covering and gold and silver plates. The Maharaja (in the end) requested Baba Attar Singh to accompany him on the expedition.

The Baba agreed and desired the 'Lion of the Punjab' to take his supper from the Gurdawara kitchen. The Ruler of the Punjab agreed remarking that once before when the Mahants of Nanakana Sahib had invited him to dine with them, they feasted him on the *Karah* of *Gur* (treacle pudding) loaves of Bajra (rye) and whey and butter. He would like to have the same again. The Maharaja accepted for his evening meals, the preparation of the Baba's kitchen. On the following morning, the Maharaja with Baba Attar Singh started on his journey.

When the two armies were facing each other at a distance of three miles, the Maharaja sent his envoy Faqir Aziz-ud-Din to confer with the Amir. During the night the Afghans fled, bag and baggage, leaving the victory to the Khalsa arms. The Maharaja ordered a salute of 51 guns to be fired from each gun.

When Maharaja Sher Singh sat on the throne, the heir apparent, *Kanwar* Partap Singh on his way back from Peshawar, halted at Rawalpindi. He was then about thirteen or fourteen. He came to visit the Gurdawara dismounted from the elephant on approaching the door and began to go up the flights of stairs. He began to untie his shield, which had fallen on the floor and was picked up by an orderly. He was supported by an Aid-de-Camp and followed by twenty or twenty five other Sardars. He wore trousers (*pyjama*) made of Gulbadan (a silk fabric) and had an *Angrakha* (Frock-coat) thrown over his body. The under-turban was of orange colour, while the upper one was pink tipped with lace. As soon as he entered the room, where *Sri Guru Garanth Sahib* reposed, he made an offering of Rs. 5,000 and then listened to a *Shabad* from the Scriptures and prepared to leave the place.

The Baba presented a superior kind of a *Khillat* (Robe of Honour) to the prince and to each of the nobles in his retinue.

After a few months more Baba Khushal Singh reached Lahore with five nice horses. The Maharaja sent him Rs 101 daily for the *Langar* (food expenses.) One day he had the honour of a private interview. The Maharaja complained that he had then been on the throne for two years but the Baba had not paid a visit before. The latter made a suitable reply. The Maharaja hinted that the administration of Rawalpindi and the *ilaga* might, again, be entrusted to him. The question was being mooted in the Khalsa Durbar, when one day, the Baba on his way to see the Maharaja met Sardars Lehna Singh and Ajit Singh, *Sandhanwalias*, with the head of Maharaja Sher Singh.

On the annexation of the Punjab by the British Government the family *jagirs* were confiscated but later on, a part was restored by the Government and confirmed by the Secretary of State.

XX. BHAÏ MANGAL SINGH, SHAHID.

Bhai Joga Singh after his marriage attended the Durbar of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. After the mutual greetings and inquiries, he entreated the Guru, over and over again* to depute any of his beloved Sikhs to Peshawar to inculcate the ordinances of the Khalsa, among the populace. The "Father of the Khalsa" looked all round in the *Diwan* and discerning Bhai Mangal Singh seated in a corner summoned him into his presence and selected him for the task :—

“ਕਹਿਯੋ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਪਸ਼ਾਵਰ ਕੋ ਜਾਹੁ ਭਾਈ ਖਾਲਸ ਕੀ ਰਹਤ
ਦੇਵੇ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਸੁਨਾਇਕੈ”

Go unto Peshawar and explain well the ordinances of the Khalsa.

*In the following words taken from the composition of a Peshawar metrist:—

ਬੀਚਸ ਪਸ਼ੋਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੋਈ ਨਾਹਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਰੀਤ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਜੋ ਦੇਵੈ ਜੋ
ਸੁਣਾਇਕੈ ॥ ਇਸੀ ਹੇਤ ਮਾਸ ਜੋ ਹਲਾਲ ਖਾਵੈ ਸਿਖ ਸਾਰੇ ਰਾਖਤੇ ਨਾ
ਖਾਲਸੇ ਕੋ ਰਹਤ ਕੋ ਬਨਾਇਕੈ ॥

Bhai Mangal Singh, accordingly set out on his mission with the 'mandamus' of the Lord of Anandpur. The news of his arrival spread forth into the city and Bhai Biba Singh who was already working in the town in the cause of the Khalsa Brotherhood came out with a large concourse of the *Sangat* to accord befitting reception to the spiritual envoy of the Satguru (the Divine Enlightner).

Bhai Mangal Singh put up at the house of Bhai Biba Singh and read out the orders of the Guru to the congregation*.

Large numbers accepted the *Amrita* (the Nector of Divine life) and morning and evening *Divans* were held to propagate the creed and the traditions of the Gurus. Bhai Biba Singh, however, felt very keenly the want of accommodation. He, therefore, represented this difficulty to Bhai Mangal Singh. He was at one with his brother and at once decided that the building of a Gurdawara might be undertaken forthwith. Although Bhai Biba Singh's house was in Moslem quarters, yet after the reading of the Scriptures and the distribution of the Sacred food, the foundation-stone was laid by Bhai Mangal Singh. It so happened that the mason shifted the stone from its position under the impression that it was not fitly laid. Bhai Biba Singh was enraged at this want of faith in the power of the saint and said that the building would be re-erected and that his family too, would become extinct.

*ਸਭ ਸਿਖਣ ਕੋ ਵਾਚ ਸੁਨਾਯੋ ॥ ਕਲਗੀਧਰ ਇਮ ਭਾਖ ਸੁਨਾਯੋ ॥
 ਭੇਜਯੋ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੁਮਹਾਰੇ ਪਾਸ ॥ ਮੇਰੇ ਰੂਪ ਲਖੋ ਤੁਮ ਤਾਸ ॥ ਮੇਰੇ ਸਿੰਘ
 ਤੇ ਅੰਮਰਤ ਛਕੋ ॥ ਪੂਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭੀ ਬਨੋ ॥ ਅੰਮਰਤਿ ਛਕ ਕਰ
 ਰਹਤ ਨਹ ਰਖੇ ॥ ਸੋ ਚੰਡਾਲ ਸਮ ਸਿਖ ਸੁਭਾਖੇ ॥

A number of years elapsed and once more the considerations of space pressed themselves on the attention of Bhai Biba Singh who urged the extensions necessitated by the fact that the *Sangat* had overgrown the dimensions of the house. Bhai Mangal Singh offered fervent prayers to the Akalpurkh (Deathless one), the reading of the Holy volume was begun and the Sacred food was distributed. It is said that a Divine voice was heard exhorting the faithful to keep up a good heart and that in due time the Guru would grant their request.

Soon after, it so came to pass that the only son of the Governor of Peshawar fell dangerously ill of dropsy which resisted all cures and charms. At last the Governor consulted the *Qazis* and *Mullas* and was told by one, in confidence, that Bhai Mangal Singh, who was living with Bhai Biba Singh was the right person to resort to. A messenger was, accordingly, despatched to make the request on behalf of his master. They readily agreed to accompany the man to the Governor's Palace. They were received with every mark of respect and consideration by the Governor and were conducted to the bed room of the fever-stricken young man. They sprinkled water over the patient's face after reciting the first stanza of Japji Sahib. The boy stood up whole as if he had never known of the disease.

The happy father was transported with joy and offered his whole kingdom as a reward for the favour.

"Nay" replied Bhai Mangal Singh, "we but want a little more room for our Gurdawara." The orders were at once issued for the Moslem inhabitants to clear out and vacate their quarters. A *patta* (grant deed) was at the same time, made out in the name

of Bhai Biba Singh. "Moreover," added the man in power, "bound am I to defray the whole cost of the building from the public exchequer and that of a permanent free kitchen for the poor to be maintained in the Gurdawara. Accept this and I will deem myself blessed." The Bhais, however, would not accept anything. On the other hand, they fully compensated the dispossessed owners.

A fine building was raised and Bhai Mangal Singh began to preach the Guru's doctrines to his heart's content. He enjoined how to observe *Gurmat* in all ceremonies with the result that the Sikh rites came into vogue very readily*. There was a general accordance with the Khalsa practises until the times of the Maharaja, when the Dogras with their subtle intrigues became all powerful at the Lahore Court and dictated not only the political but also the religious policy of the kingdom*.

His eminent success created for Bhai Mangal Singh, inveterate enemies among the *Mullas* and *Qazis*. He knew all this and death loomed large before his eyes. He belonged, however, to a race, which has perhaps passed away for ever and did not shrink a jot from his duty. The Sikhs of yore impelled by the enthusiasm

*ਚਲੀ ਗੀਤ ਸਭ ਦੇਸ ਮਝਾਰੀ । ਕਿਤਨੀ ਦਿਵਸ ਲਗ ਚਲੀ ਪਛਾਰੀ ।

*ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰੰਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੇ ਵਖਤ ਮਿਟੀ ਸਭ ਗੀਤੀ । ਆਗੇ ਪਾਛੇ ਬਾਮਨ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਕੀਤੀ ਬਡੀ ਅਨੀਤੀ ॥ ਭੋਲਾ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਮਝੇ ਜੋ ਚਾਹਤ ਸੋ ਕਰਦੇ ॥ ਨਿਜ ਮਤ ਦੀ ਸਭ ਗੀਤ ਚਲਾਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਅਕਾਲੋਂ ਡਰਦੇ ॥

of their faith, were, more often than not, prompted either to march into the trenches or to deliver the message of their Gurus, exactly in the places, which were considered to be the most dangerous for their life and person. Their conduct roused curiosity, their beliefs opposition and their firmness persecution. Theirs were not the conviction of a dilettante or a gentleman, who changes his views with the points of the social or political compass. They lived in the name of God and died in the path of the Guru, they moved on the earth but their eyes were set on the Heavens. The Diety to them was a more living reality than the sun, the moon and the stars. Religion first and life next, the *Panth* (the community) before the 'Self,' were the working principles of their life theory.

The times of trial for our Bhai (Brother) were fast approaching. The Governor died and was replaced by a new official, whose ears had already been poisoned by the fanatics. Immediately after the assumption of his powers, orders were issued summoning Bhai Mangal Singh into the Durbar. The *Qazis* and *Mullahs* held a lengthy discussion and tried to persuade him to accept riches, honour and even the daughter of the Governor as a prize for entering the folds of Islam. His calm and old replies set at naught all the rhetoric of the *Mullahs* and his firm faith was proof against all temptations.

The Governor, as the last resort of all tyrants, ordered the forcible conversion of the Sikh Saint. One of his satellites advanced to touch the *Keshas* when Bhai Mangal Singh was fired through and through with a divine indignation. He firmly grasped his dagger and jumped upon the group and despatched four or five of the soldiers. Then he leapt on one side and as they fell upon him,

hundreds went down under his mighty strokes. One man facing a whole army, was in that Moslem tract vindicating the truth of the saying —

“ਸਵਾ ਲਾਖ ਸੇ ਏਕ ਲੜਾਉ” ॥

ਤਬੈ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਮ ਕਹਾਉ” ॥

The Bhai had begun to recite Sukhmani Sahib and when a fatal stroke severed his head, nineteen *ashtpadis* (cantos) had been repeated. Bhaiji's hand, however supported the head back on to the trunk and the tongue began to repeat the life giving verses of Sri Guru Arjan Devji, walking all the time towards his residence. The last verse was finished when he reached the gate of Asa Mai.

In the Sikh times, a decent memorial was built to mark the spot, where the martyr fell.

It is a matter for keen regret that the management of the place now known as 'Shahid Ganj' has lapsed into not very energetic hands. The present manager, Bawa Karam Singh, *Mahant*, does not take much pains to invite pilgrims or to hold religious gatherings there. He is, however, a matriculate and an intelligent youngman and he has promised to ask the cooperation of the Singh Sabha to improve the state of things. The two Peshawar Singh Sabhas (Cantonment and City) owe it, as a duty, to themselves and the *Panth* to look after the sanitation and *raunaq* of the holy shrine*.

*Just opposite the fort.

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